



SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAII
O'AHU GROUP

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MALAMA I KA HONUA
Cherish the Earth

Date October 4, 2016,

To Chair Ernie Martin and the City Council Members of Honolulu,

I am writing on behalf of the Sierra Club Oahu Group in SUPPORT of Bill 59, which aims to close the loophole on the insufficient plastic bag ban on our island. As an environmental non-profit organization that is a part of the "Rise Above Plastics" Coalition in Hawaii, we are very concerned with the amount of single-use plastic waste on our island. We feel that this legislative initiative is a great first step to reduce all plastic bags in the City, not just the ones distributed at check-out, as well as promote a zero-waste future.

We support the intentions of this Bill and suggest an amendment to the definition of "Reusable bag" to make Bill 59 more effective and ensure that we stop this loophole once and for all. Please see proposed language changes in yellow:

"Reusable bag" means a bag with handles that is specifically designed and manufactured for multiple reuse and is made of:

- (1) cloth or other machine-washable fabric; or
- (2) durable material suitable for reuse, including plastic that is at least 2.25 mils thick. Recycled, non-film plastic, with a minimum thickness of 4.0 mil.

Increasing the minimum thickness for plastic bags distributed at check-out from 3 mils to 4 mils has proven to be cost-prohibitive for businesses and was the requirement used successfully in cities like Austin, TX and Portland, OR. Including "non-film plastic" in the definition further limits retailers ability to get around the spirit of the bill, by not handing out so-called biodegradable bags, that break down quickly into thousands of micro plastics and still pose a risk to our natural environment.

Mahalo for the introduction of this Bill and attempting to close the loophole in Oahu's plastic bag ban. On behalf of the Sierra Club of Hawaii Oahu Group, please consider our suggested amendments for Bill 59 and move this initiative forward.

Aloha,

Jodi Malinoski

Sierra Club Oahu Group Coordinator

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